

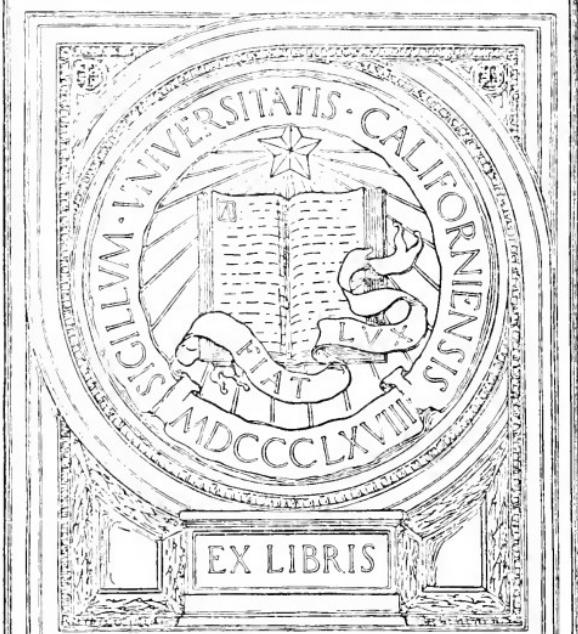
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THE BUILDING FUND, A  
COMEDY IN THREE ACTS,  
BY WILLIAM BOYLE, BEING  
VOLUME VII. OF THE  
ABBNEY THEATRE SERIES  
*(Second Edition).*



THE BUILDING FUND. A COMEDY IN  
THREE ACTS. BY WILLIAM BOYLE.

SECOND EDITION.

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*P. 26*

PERSONS.

MRS. GROGAN, a miserly old woman.

SHAN GROGAN, her son, another miser.

SHEILA O'DWYER, her granddaughter.

MICHAEL O'CALLAGHAN, an elderly farmer.

DAN MACSWEENEY, a young farmer.

TIME—THE PRESENT.

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THE BUILDING FUND was first produced by the Irish National Theatre Society in the Abbey Theatre, on Tuesday, 25th April, 1905, under the direction of W. G. Fay, with the following cast:—

<i>Mrs. Grogan,</i> ...	... EMMA VERNON.
<i>Shan Grogan,</i> ...	... W. G. FAY.
<i>Sheila O'Dwyer,</i> ...	... SARA ALLGOOD.
<i>Michael O'Callaghan,</i> ...	... F. J. FAY.
<i>Dan MacSweeney,</i> ...	... ARTHUR SINCLAIR.

SCENE—A Farmhouse Kitchen.

A month elapses between Acts I. and II., and three days between Acts II. and III.

# THE BUILDING FUND.

## ACT I.

SCENE : *A large, untidy farm kitchen. Door into yard at back. Another door on right into room. Loud knocking at a distance. Grogan discovered. He peeps into the yard.*

*Grogan.* The collectors for the new chapel ! God direct me the best way to avoid them ! (*Moves about uneasily, pauses, returns, and peeps out again. Speaks softly through room door.*) Whist there, girl ! Don't open the hall-door ! Be off into the garden and weed the onion-bed. (*Knocking repeated.*) I'm afraid it's no use ! They'll come round to the back when they can't manage at the front. But it's a mean thing to give in without a blow, so I'll make tracks into the back bedroom. [*Goes into room.*

[*O'Callaghan and MacSweeney come in from yard. The latter carries a collecting-book in his hand.*

*O'Callaghan.* We might be rapping at the front door till Sunday.

*MacSweeney.* That's the only day the miserable creatures open it.

*O'Callaghan.* They'll have to open it wide enough before long to let out the old woman's coffin. God knows she might grow a little tender at the end of her days, but it's harder and harder she gets. Still, she's decency, itself, compared with her son.

*MacSweeney.* Well, if they don't open their purse for the Building Fund, Father Andrew will read them out the Riot Act.

*O'Callaghan.* And why wouldn't he? (*Knocks on table.*) The Grogans must behave like other people. Everyone subscribes but them. If they won't, they should be made examples of. [*Knocks again.*]

*MacSweeney.* Shan's coming at last. When he finds he can't shut the door in our faces, he'll try to put us off with blarney. [*Grogan comes in.*]

*Grogan.* Boys, O boys! Is it yourselves that's in it? It's a cure for sore eyes to see the pair of you. Won't ye take the weight off your limbs, gentlemen? Come over here to the fire. Sorrow be off that lazy girl, she let it out again! Never mind. It's the fine, warm weather that's in it, glory be to God! only a little showery for the hay-making. And how is all your care, Mr. O'Callaghan? I was sorry to the heart to hear about the loss of your poor Aunt Ellen. I wouldn't have missed the funeral on any account, only the mare had such a bad cough on my hands.

[*They remain standing.*]

*O'Callaghan.* We call, Mr. Grogan, regarding the collection for the new church. Father Andrew hopes you'll give us something towards the building fund.

*MacSweeney.* He expects, Shan, you'll top the parish with a big subscription.

*Grogan.* Oh, but he's the joker! Me that has neither chick nor child to say a prayer in it after me!

*O'Callaghan.* You're the sort he expects the most from. Put down your name for a hundred and you'll never be forgotten, Shan, as long as grass grows or water runs.

*Grogan.* The chapel that's in it is good enough for my day.

*O'Callaghan.* The chapel that's in it is falling down on top of us.

*Grogan.* Well, there were very good people in Ireland when they had to hear Mass on the hill-sides —better far than now.

*MacSweeney.* That's neither here nor there, Mr. Grogan. This parish has decided, after due deliberation, that it wants a new one. *I* proposed the resolution at that meeting assembled. Will *you* follow up my efforts by giving fifty pounds to the fund?

*Grogan.* Fifty pounds! Young man, do you think that I'm going out to rob?

*MacSweeney.* Oh, there's easier ways of getting money than that.

*Grogan.* Marrying a girl with a fortune—the way you be trying to do, eh?

*O'Callaghan.* Come, come, Shan; the question is will you subscribe fifty pounds?

*Grogan.* I'll not subscribe fifty pounds because I haven't one pound between me and death.

*O'Callaghan.* Oh, now, Shan, we're not gossoons. We all know one another here.

*MacSweeney.* You bought Moloney's place for seven hundred. You gave five hundred for the Mill Farm over the heads of people in it since the Flood. You and your mother have more money in the Bank than either of you knows what to do with; and you can't spare a trifle between you for the good of your poor, old miserable souls!

*Grogan.* Just listen to that, Mr. O'Callaghan. You'd think the decent boy was bargaining for a girl. He has good practice that way by all accounts, and knows everywhere there's a dry penny far or near.

*O'Callaghan.* I think it's very sound talk. People must support their religion, you know. If not, what would become of it?

*Grogan (changing his manner).* Sit down, Michael. Draw a chair over beside me, Mr. Dan.

[*They all sit.*

*Grogan (confidentially).* Ye both take me for a hard man, I suppose?

*O'Callaghan (smiling).* Well, now is your chance to make us change that opinion, Shan.

*Grogan.* Thank you, Michael dear, and change it you will. Would either of you think, now, that a person who gave half of all he had in the world would be doing well?

*O'Callaghan.* He would be doing very well, indeed.

*MacSweeney.* He would be doing extremely well.

*Grogan.* And if he gave *all* he had ? What would ye say to that ?

*O'Callaghan.* He would be a saint.

*MacSweeney.* A self-sufficient, holy martyr.

*Grogan.* And Father Andrew wouldn't expect anything better of him ?

*O'Callaghan.* Nobody could. But where are we to find such a person ?

*Grogan* (*rising and pointing to himself*). Here ! I'm that very person.

*Both.* You, Shan Grogan ?

*Grogan.* Ay, me ! Me, the man you call a miser ! The mean old reprobate who begrudges a copper for the benefit of his poor soul.

*O'Callaghan.* And when is this miracle to happen ?

*Grogan.* Now ! This minute ! Here on the nail, by all that's holy ! [*Strikes the table with his fist* ;

*Opens his waistcoat, takes from an inside pocket a purse, opens the purse, then rises and hands a coin to O'Callaghan.*

*Grogan.* There is my subscription, Michael. It's the only coin I am possessed of in the world.

*O'Callaghan.* A shilling !

*MacSweeney.* The miserable conglomeration of twelve beggarly pennies !

*Grogan.* Ay, indeed. And it's a good one. It was given to me by a man I sold a score of sheep to at

the fair of Ballinasloe. He took me for the herd ; and I kept it ever since for some great, worthy object like the present. (*Waving his hand.*) Everything else round here belongs to my mother.

*O'Callaghan.* And your mother—?

*Grogan.* Oh, she's bad in bed and can't be seen by anybody.

[*MacSweeney advances to pick up the shilling.*

*Grogan snatches it and puts it away.*

*O'Callaghan and MacSweeney move towards the door.*

*Grogan.* Good morning, gentlemen. You'll not be meeting many others on your rounds who'll offer you their last shilling.

*O'Callaghan (turning round at door).* We'll not meet many, Shan, as hard as you. We'll call again as soon as we can see your mother.

*MacSweeney.* We go ; but we shall return ; and if that won't move you, we will send the priest.

*Grogan.* And it's myself will give his riverence the hearty welcome. It's all I have to give him ; and wishing you success on your travels—(*MacSweeney and O'Callaghan go*)—and a book filled with good intentions.

[*Grogan closes door behind them. Coughing is heard from the room. Mrs. Grogan comes in.*

*Mrs. Grogan.* I heard what they said, Shan. Everybody's wanting our money. The collectors in the first place—

*Grogan.* And who else ?

*Mrs. Grogan (showing a letter).* Look at that. The letter that came from the post. It's the nuns telling me what a good, pious girl my granddaughter Sheila is.

*Grogan.* It's often I heard you say you'd give nothing to either Sarah or her daughter. Why would you go back on that now?

*Mrs. Grogan.* Why did you, yourself, give a whole shilling to them collectors for the new chapel ?

*Grogan.* I didn't give them that shilling, mother. I only tendered it.

*Mrs. Grogan.* And the foolish men refused it ?

*Grogan.* They did because they expect a good deal more from you.

[*Mrs. Grogan sits down, laughs, and chokes with coughing. Grogan brings her a cup of water; she sips it and recovers breath.*]

*Mrs. Grogan.* The notion takes my breath away. A new chapel with boarded floor and varnished seats for the rubbish of this parish !

*Grogan.* Marble floor and stain-glass windows, mother. Not a less ! You'll have to shell out half your savings for a stain-glass window, mother. You can't take money with you when you die, Father Andrew says.

*Mrs. Grogan (agitated).* He says that about me, does he ?

*Grogan.* He says it about everybody.

*Mrs. Grogan.* And what do you say, Shan?

*Grogan.* Nothing, mother—not a word at all. I know you'll do the right thing without anyone's advice.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Leave it to you, Shan? (*Grogan sighs.*) You wouldn't spend it foolishly! (*Grogan shakes his head.*) Wouldn't waste it on funerals or tombstones over me?

*Grogan.* In throth I would not, mother. (*Knocking heard at the door.*) Who's there?

[*Grogan goes to door, peeps out, shakes his head to someone outside, and returns.*]

Some stroll of a girl—selling bazaar tickets, I suppose.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Let her come over the threshold till I take a look at her.

*Grogan (roughly).* Come in. [*Sheila comes in.*]

*Mrs. Grogan.* Easy to see who she is. I could have told you that out of this letter.

*Grogan.* Is it Sarah's daughter we have in it?

*Mrs. Grogan (to Sheila).* I suppose your mother sent you here to beg?

*Sheila.* Nobody belonging to you, grandmother, ever begged of anyone.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Then what is it you want here?

*Sheila.* Work, grandmother. . . . My mother wished me to go into service; but that I'll never do with strangers as long as one belonging to myself will have me.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Your mother's poor, I heard.

*Grogan.* Indeed, mother, you 're very foolish to be talking to the likes of her at all.

*Mrs. Grogan.* What do you say they call you ?

*Sheila* (*dropping on her knee*). Grandmother, your own name, Sheila.

*Mrs. Grogan* (*speaking milder*). You have my mouth and eyes, but you are not so comely. There 's a seat. [Pointing to seat.]

*Grogan* (*to Sheila*). So you come here begging, after all ?

*Sheila.* Not of you, uncle.

*Grogan.* When you beg of her, you beg of me, no matter who you are. Anything she might give you is so much out of my pocket.

*Mrs. Grogan* (*to Grogan*). Leave it to me, Shan. I 'm not going to give her anything (*coughs*).

*Grogan.* I 'll take good care you 'll not. (*To Sheila*) Out of this house with you ! Get away home to your mother, and tell her we don 't want either her or you.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Easy, Shan, easy. This house is mine a little longer (*coughs*).

*Grogan.* Oh, yes, mother. Everything 's yours— whoever helped to make it.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Shan, nobody 's denying what you 've done. (*To Sheila*) Come over here, girl. Sit down. I want to tell you that I don 't intend to give you one halfpenny, or to leave your mother one halfpenny when I go ; but I 'll speak to you about earning your bread. You wish to work for me ?

*Grogan.* We don't want her at all, mother. She's afraid of work or she wouldn't be afraid of service—as she tells us.

*Sheila.* What I said, uncle, is, I don't like working for the stranger if my own will have me.

*Grogan.* Ay, to be sure! You know no stranger will put up with you.

*Sheila.* I know nothing of the sort. I never asked them.

*Mrs. Grogan.* The girl's right. Her own friends will not spare her, Shan. (*To Sheila*) Are you content to work for me the same as for a stranger?

*Sheila.* I am, grandmother.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Then we'll see what stuff you're made of. The girl I have isn't worth the food she eats. I'll be glad to be rid of her. Your engagement is, five pounds the half year, five o'clock in the morning, and, whatever happens, I'm not going to see your mother.

*Sheila.* I'm very grateful to you, grandmother.

[*Sheila tries to kiss Mrs. Grogan, who pushes her away.*

*Mrs. Grogan.* No, no! No plaster of that sort. This is entirely a business matter.

[*Sheila takes off her cloak, &c.*

*Sheila.* I'll be much better to you, grandmother, than a stranger.

*Mrs. Grogan.* You can be as good to me as you like. I'm not going to be a bit better to you than

anybody else. Understand that from the very beginning, my young woman.

*Grogan.* She comes here for nothing but what she can get out of you.

*Mrs. Grogan.* And I've told her all *that's* going to be.

*Grogan (tossing his head disdainfully).* God help your wit, woman ! She'll worry more out of you than wages. It's what you *have* she wants, not you at all.

*Mrs. Grogan.* And what else do any of you want but what I have, and me out of the way ?

*Grogan.* Maybe, you'd like to take it with you when you go, mother ?

*Mrs. Grogan.* What I take with me, Shan, or what I leave, is no affair of yours.

*Grogan (alarmed).* May God between me and the light of day !—whose else's is it ?

*Mrs. Grogan (rising).* Mine, Shan Grogan !—Mine !

*Grogan.* And doesn't it belong to me as much as you ? You can't be with us always, mother ?

*Mrs. Grogan.* I can't be with you *always* ? You mean (*in a low voice*), I can't be with you long ?

*Grogan.* Long or short, mother, you must go some day. I want to be secure when that time comes. Is there a crime in that ? You promised wages to the likes of her (*pointing to Sheila*). What do you promise me ?

*Mrs. Grogan.* Nothing. Nothing to you, or anyone, before I die.

*Grogan.* It's well you think of dying ever.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Ay, and well you mind me *you* are thinking of it, too. Weak as I am, I'm not blind to signs. Night and noon, I see you reckoning how long I'll last. Son, take care! Take care, I tell you, what you drive me to! I have no strength to fight my end and you. One of us must suffer—you or me. God's curse is on our riches!

[*She sinks down exhausted. Sheila comes to her aid.*

*Sheila.* It's a shame, uncle, to talk to her the way you do, and she so old and feeble. See what you've done. [Pointing to *Mrs. Grogan*.

*Grogan.* What right have you to put your tongue between us?—A shuler just stepped in from God knows where.

*Sheila.* She's my grandmother. I'll not stay here to look at her abused.

*Grogan.* You'll not stay here? Who wants you to stay here? Take up your cloak and go the way that you came.

*Mrs. Grogan (recovering).* Sheila, give me your hand (*she rises*). (*To Grogan.*) While I am to the fore, I'll regulate who comes and goes; and if that doesn't suit you, the door is as wide open for you, Shan, to walk out as it was for her to walk in. (*To Sheila*) Come with me, Colleen. I'll show you where to find a working apron. [Going.

*Grogan.* You wouldn't set her over me, mother, after all my years of labour?

*Mrs. Grogan.* Nobody but me is over anyone here as long as I'm among you.

[*She goes out, followed by Sheila, who turns in the door and nods defiantly at Grogan.*

*Grogan (sitting down firmly).* Then I must sit close, and keep a firm grip upon the holding.

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

A MONTH LATER.

SCENE : *The same kitchen much tidier than before. Grogan discovered alone, seated at table, eating his breakfast.*

*Grogan.* If I don't get this girl out of the house she'll be the ruin of me. She is only here a month, and she twists that old woman round her finger in a way a man couldn't manage in a lifetime. Five and forty years I've lived here. Thirty years I've laboured to put by a bit of money in the old woman's name ; and now, at the heel o' the hunt, a young whipster comes, from God knows where, to cut me out of, maybe, half of my earnings. A saint couldn't stand it. A saint wouldn't stand it. Why should I, who s not that way inclined at all ? Piety is the card up Sheila's sleeve ; and throth, like the ace of hearts, it's a trump card always. Well, if it comes to that, I don't see why I shouldn't play the pious game myself as well as another.

[*Mrs. Grogan comes in from the room leaning on Sheila's arm.*

*Mrs. Grogan.* Is this the time of day you take your breakfast, Shan?

*Grogan (mildly).* I didn't want to hurry Sheila. She has a lot of things to do—the creature!

*Sheila (surprised).* Why, uncle, your breakfast was ready half an hour ago.

*Grogan.* And how could I be hurrying you with it when I knew your grandmother wanted you beside her at her prayers? You're a good girl, Sheila. You mind us, soul and body. It's the Holy Family we'll be joining soon, please God, if you stay with us.

*Mrs. Grogan.* We don't want so much devotion that you need neglect your business, Shan. Whose fault is it?

*Sheila.* I'm afraid, granny, it was mine. I forgot to tell him his breakfast was waiting at the fire.

*Mrs. Grogan.* That's the way I'm robbed. Burning fire to keep a breakfast warm, and all the time a man delayed from his work waiting for it. (*Coughs.*) As soon as I'm a little stronger, it's not depending on anyone I'll be. I'll do my own work (*coughs*), and save this paying and feeding useless people.

*Sheila.* Will I boil an egg for your breakfast, granny?

*Mrs. Grogan (sarcastically).* Oh, to be sure! more extravagance. You know very well I couldn't eat it, and you'll have it for yourself. Waste, waste; nothing but idleness and waste all round. God help me! (*coughs*).

[*Sheila pours out a cup of tea and hands it to Mrs. Grogan.*

*Sheila.* Drink that drop of tea, Granny—it's fresh made.

*Mrs. Grogan.* And what did you do with the bottom of the pot? Threw it to the ducks, I suppose?

*Sheila (pointing to the table).* I have it here for myself, granny.

*Mrs. Grogan (sipping tea).* When I was a girl, I never got a sup o' tea from year's end to year's end.

*Sheila.* It was very dear, then; wasn't it, granny?

*Mrs. Grogan.* It's dear enough still with everybody using it all day long. Did you feed the hens?

*Sheila.* Long ago, and let the ducks out too.

*Mrs. Grogan.* I suppose it's in the oats they'll be by this time. What about the calves?

[*Grogan goes.*

*Sheila.* I gave them their milk and put them in the bawn.

*Mrs. Grogan.* With the washing on the hedge? Why, they'll chew the linen into holes, and maybe choke themselves.

*Sheila.* No, granny dear; I spread the linen in the upper garden, where the sun comes earliest.

*Mrs. Grogan.* I see ye want it stole. Don't ye know there's half a dozen tinkers squatted in the quarry?

*Sheila (wearily).* They went away a week ago, granny.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Ah, dear. There's what it is to be old! I never hear anything that's going on now till it's all over. Is that egg boiled?

*Sheila.* Granny dear, I thought you couldn't take one.

*Mrs. Grogan (sighing).* Ah! it's the little bit I eat that's grudged me now, I see.

[*Sheila hurries to boil an egg; Grogan comes in.*

*Mrs. Grogan (seeing him).* You here still? Is the hay up yet?

*Grogan.* We expect to finish it to-day, or tomorrow at furthest.

*Mrs. Grogan.* You have it very long in hands this year.

*Grogan.* The weather was against us, mother.

*Mrs. Grogan.* The weather never was so bad when I was about, nor the wages so high, nor the people so idle. I wish I could look after things myself (*coughs*).

*Grogan.* But you know you are only saving up for others, mother. Maybe for some that you never laid eyes on—(*glancing at Sheila*) till a month ago.

*Mrs. Grogan.* How do you know, Shan, that I'll have anything to leave anybody when that time comes?

*Grogan (stooping close to his mother).* If you let some people have the sway over you, you won't have mind enough left to settle anything for yourself or any other body.

[*Sheila brings forward the egg. Grogan retires and looks out of window.*

*Mrs. Grogan.* I suppose it's only half done.

*Sheila.* I gave it three minutes and a half.

*Mrs. Grogan (crossly).* Then you made a bullet of it!

*Grogan (suddenly turning from window).* Sheila! Sheila! run! The calves are in the garden eating up the cabbage-plants. (*Sheila goes out.*) Someone left the gate open on purpose. (*Calling after Sheila.*) Drive them down to the long meadow.

*Mrs. Grogan.* That girl's good for nothing. She's just like all the rest.

*Grogan.* She is careless, mother. But what else can you expect? She wasn't brought up to do much.

*Mrs. Grogan (changing her tone, and looking steadily at Grogan).* You want to be shut of her, Shan?

[*Sits near fire.*]

*Grogan.* Oh, no, mother. You like to have her here to keep you to your prayers. Even if she neglects other things, what harm? People can't be looking after everything. The poor girl's busy all her time trying to convert you.

*Mrs. Grogan.* That should be a warning to you, Shan, not to put it off till you come to my time of life. Nobody will lose all their time trying to convert you, that's certain.

*Grogan (with forced laughter).* Mother, you're as full of fun as ever. You'll not be leaving us for a good bit yet, I'm thinking.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Leaving you! What nonsense are you talking? I have a great many things to do yet before I go (*coughs*).

[*O'Callaghan and MacSweeney come in.*

*O'Callaghan.* Good morning, Mrs. Grogan. I'm glad to see you about on foot again. We call regarding the collection.

*Grogan.* I never heard your knock, gentlemen.

*O'Callaghan (to Grogan).* No; you couldn't hear us the last time; so we came round to the back to-day for fear we might disturb you. (*To Mrs. Grogan.*) We call regarding the collection for the new church—

*MacSweeney (interrupting).* Expecting a liberal donation, Mrs. Grogan, to the building fund from a lady of your well-known public generosity.

*Mrs. Grogan (feebley).* Shan, tell them I have nothing for them to-day.

*Grogan.* My mother regrets, gentlemen, that in her present state of health, and not knowing how long her illness may continue—

*O'Callaghan.* We heard what she said. Flourishing talk won't improve on it, Shan.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Mike O'Callaghan, you are plain and honest like myself. You can take my plain answer; and swaggering MacSweeney, your friend, is welcome to my son's rigmarole.

*MacSweeney.* I wish, ma'am, you'd make us welcome to a more substantial contribution.

*O'Callaghan.* We are only doing a work of piety, Mrs. Grogan.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Your piety all comes out of other people's pockets.

*O'Callaghan.* We have both subscribed according to our means.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Then you have done your duty. Why won't that content you?

*MacSweeney.* Oh, we'd like to see others doing their duty, too.

*Grogan* (*sneeringly to MacSweeney*). It's very good of you to think so much of other people's souls. Some day when I've time I'll preach to you against the sin of fortune-hunting.

[*MacSweeney turns and looks out of window.*

*Mrs. Grogan coughs and moves uneasily in her chair.* *O'Callaghan comes closer and looks sympathetically at her.*

*O'Callaghan.* Sheila Grogan, you and I knew each other before either o' these was born. May I speak plainly to you? (*Mrs. Grogan nods.*) You are a hard woman, Sheila, but you're honest. Your son is hard, and maybe not so honest. (*Turning to Shan.*) Shan, I don't go behind your back to say what I think of you. (*Continuing to Mrs. Grogan.*) Sheila Grogan, we were young together; we are old now; and it won't be long before both of us will have to leave the much or little we may have behind us. Do you ever think of that?

[*Mrs. Grogan tries to speak, but fails.*

*Grogan (sneeringly).* Fifty pounds to the fund, mother, that's the price of Mike O'Callaghan's sermon.

*Mrs. Grogan.* I said before, and I say again, your building fund will never get a shilling out of this place as long as I am here. I can't afford to be extravagant.

*O'Callaghan.* Want in this world has been a terror to you all your life ; do you think there's no want anywhere but here ?

*Mrs. Grogan.* I'll make my own provision for the future in my own way, Michael.

*O'Callaghan.* Then I'll say no more. But I'll shake hands with you for sake of old times, Sheila, when both of us were young.

[*Gives his hand to Mrs. Grogan, who holds it a moment, drops it suddenly, and leans her forehead on her hand.* *O'Callaghan and MacSweeney go out.* *Grogan closes the door after them.*

*Grogan.* It's as hard to shake them off as a pair of County Kerry beggars. And how Mike O'Callaghan can talk as if he was a Scripture-reader.

*Mrs. Grogan.* He put me in mind of old days, Shan.

*Grogan.* And me, mother, in mind of to-day and to-morrow and the future.

*Mrs. Grogan.* He put you in mind of the future, Shan ?

*Grogan.* He did that! Though I was often, often thinking of the same myself.

*Mrs. Grogan.* You surprise me, Shan. I never expected you to think about the time to come.

*Grogan.* Don't I, indeed! Night, noon, and morning I be thinking that it's more than time you made provision for it by settling the place on me.

*Mrs. Grogan.* What have you in the back of your head now?

*Grogan.* This is what I have, mother, and it's time I brought it to the front, I'm thinking (*sits down*). If you keep everything in your own name to the end, mother, there'll be a horrid lot of legacy tax to pay. Now, isn't it a sin to let the Government put its hand in your pocket after you're gone when you can easily keep it out by a little thought while you're living?

*Mrs. Grogan.* How am I to keep it out, Shan?

*Grogan.* Just by handing over all you have to me a decent little while before you go.

*Mrs. Grogan.* And depend on you after as long as I'd be in it?

*Grogan.* It wouldn't make the least difference in the world, mother.

*Mrs. Grogan (deliberately).* Shan Grogan, as long as I have breath in my body, I'll be mistress here. I'll never be a pensioner on any man's floor. The fortune I got when I married your father I always held in my own name. With care and labour it has grown and grown. Do you think what I

refused to hand over to a husband I'll now hand over to a son? You may drop that notion out and out, Shan.

*Grogan.* Then you ought to make your will, mother. If you die without a will, your daughter will come here and claim half of everything you leave, down to the very bed you die on. That's the law, and that's why Sheila's here before you go to be in safe possession.

*Mrs. Grogan (with regret).* I know that's the law. I had advice before your father's death, and got him to leave everything to me.

*Grogan.* It's right to be prepared against such accidents.

*Mrs. Grogan (thoughtfully).* We can't keep accidents away. Except for that, I see no hurry... I want time to think about it.

*Grogan.* Mother dear, you were ever and on a woman of determination. Why not do the thing to-day?

*Mrs. Grogan.* To-day? Well, why shouldn't it be to-day as you're are so anxious about it.

*Grogan.* That's right, mother. A good resolution should never be put off, the clergy tell us.

*Mrs. Grogan.* So you begin to quote the clergy, too.

*Grogan.* There's many a wise thing they say—about this world. I'll harness the mare at once and drive in for Attorney Dawson.

*Mrs. Grogan.* You'll be at no such cost. Anyone

can draw a will. I've your father's in the chest to copy by.

*Grogan.* But who's to write it? It would never do for me—

*Mrs. Grogan.* No. Mike O'Callaghan's the man. He writes a good hand; and he's a teetotaler and won't want whisky.

*Grogan.* But he'll want a subscription for the building fund.

*Mrs. Grogan.* He'll not want more than 'Turney Dawson would in fees; and, in the end, we must give something, I'm afraid.

*Grogan.* That's true, that's true. But he doesn't like a bone in my body, mother. You heard what he said about my honesty.

*Mrs. Grogan.* That can't upset the will.

*Grogan.* No, no. All the better, maybe. Nobody can say afterwards he showed me any favour in the wording.

*Mrs. Grogan.* I'll think of someone else by-and-by to be the witnesses (*sighs*). Where's Sheila? I must get back into bed.

*Grogan.* Oh, mother, jewel darling, you are not unwell?

*Mrs. Grogan (rising feebly).* Never stronger in my life! (*Sinks back in chair.*) Where's Sheila, I say?

*Grogan.* I sent her to turn the calves out of the garden after she had left the gate open for them to get in. Now, she's somewhere whispering with

that young ass, MacSweeney. When she meets him, she'll break no bones to hurry back to you.

*Mrs. Grogan.* A nice bargain he'd be for any girl.

*Grogan.* Sure, the fellow expects you'll be leaving Sheila something, maybe.

*Mrs. Grogan.* All waiting for the poor old woman's shoes !

*Grogan.* Please God, it's bald and grey and humped with waiting that we'll all be, mother.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Amen ! Call Sheila, can't you ?

[*Grogan goes to door and beckons. Sheila hurries in.*

*Grogan.* Your grandmother's here waiting for you this half hour. [*Sheila goes to Mrs. Grogan's chair.*

*Sheila.* Why, granny dear, you don't look well at all ! You haven't had a turn while I was out ?

*Mrs. Grogan (feebly).* No, no. Never better. I want to go to bed.

[*Sheila looks at Grogan inquiringly.*

*Grogan.* You need not lie down, mother, to do what you are going to do.

*Mrs. Grogan (after an effort, speaking with firmness).* Did you ever hear of anyone making their will sitting up :

*Grogan.* No, mother, I can't say I did.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Go after Mike O'Callaghan at once. I know he'll come when you tell him I'm going to make my will. (*Coughs.*) But you'll have a weary wait, all of you, before you get a penny of my

money ! I can't take it with me (*with feeble anger*). You all tell me I can't take it with me.

*Grogan (going).* Don't excite yourself, mother. You have a big business before you to-day. [He goes out.

*Mrs. Grogan.* A big journey is what Shan means. (Coughs.) How am I prepared to make it, Sheila ?

*Sheila.* You have plenty of time to prepare yet, granny, darling.

*Mrs. Grogan (breathing with difficulty).* "Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven." . . . Wasn't that the sermon you were telling me about, last Sunday ?

*Sheila.* Yes, grandmother. But come along ; a little rest will do you good.

*Mrs. Grogan (coughs).* A big rest is what is in your mind, Sheila. . . . You'd be all glad to have me out of the way . . . I know. . . . Only for that . . . I wouldn't care how soon I left you.

*Sheila.* Our own turn will come as well as yours, granny ; and both are a good way off, I hope.

*Mrs. Grogan.* Oh, yes !—a good way off yet—a good . . . way off. (Coughs.) But I am going to pack my box to-day for my long journey.

*Sheila.* Your box, granny ?

*Mrs. Grogan (earnestly whispers).* Ay ; and I must put into it all the treasures I have laid up for myself in heaven.

*Sheila.* Grandmother, I think you ought to lie in bed. The men will be back soon. Come.

[*Mrs. Grogan, with Sheila's help, moves a step or two.*

*Mrs. Grogan.* You know I was busy all my life—laying up this treasure... You want some of it. Mike O'Callaghan wants some of it to build a chapel with (*fiercely*). Shan, your uncle, wants it all. Whisper, Sheila (*mysteriously*), I'm going to take it with me!

[*Moves nearer door.*

*Sheila.* Granny dear, don't talk so foolishly. You'll live, please God, to share it with us many years.

*Mrs. Grogan (fiercely).* Share it with you? Not one single penny! (*Coughs.*) It's all my own. . . Nobody but me has any right to it... I'll take it with me—every farthing—when I go. (*Coughs.*)

[*Goes into room leaning feebly on Sheila's arm.*

*Grogan comes back, followed by O'Callaghan and MacSweeney. MacSweeney stands looking out of the door and arranging his necktie.*

*Grogan (briskly).* It was a lucky thing I overtook you at the corner, boys.

*O'Callaghan.* We stopped a bit to talk to Cripple Moore, the stone-breaker. The poor old fellow gave us half-a-crown. There's an example for you, Shan... But what's this change in Mrs. Grogan?

*Grogan.* Well, she just took it into her head suddenly to make her will. It must be your talk did it, Michael.

*O'Callaghan.* Between you and me, Shan, she won't be long left with you. I'm sorry if my talk upset her.

*Grogan.* Oh, she's all right! And, indeed, you did the proper, friendly thing when you hinted it was

time to settle her affairs. Old people want reminding of their duty that way.

*O'Callaghan.* The duty I reminded her of was something else. But never mind ; I'm willing to do anything I can to help her.

*MacSweeney* (*coming forward*). Am *I* of any use at all, Mr. Grogan ?

*Grogan.* Indeed, Dan, it puzzles me to answer. Wait a bit, though. I suppose you are capable of witnessing a signature to a document ?

*MacSweeney* (*proudly*). I have witnessed my father's signature many a time to an I O U.

*Grogan* (*laughing*). I know. There are two of them in the house at this blessed minute.

*MacSweeney.* Then why ask foolish questions ?

*Grogan.* I beg your pardon, Dan. I forgot you had so much experience. Stay here. We'll call you when we want you. Sit down and make yourself at home. Mr. O'Callaghan, come this way. (*Opens door and speaks louder.*) Sheila, if your grandmother's ready, you can come down here and talk to young Mr. MacSweeney. He'll tell you all about himself. Ah ! I thought that would bring her !

[*Sheila comes from room. She nods to MacSweeney.*

*Sheila.* All is ready, uncle. Grandmother is very anxious to get it over.

*Grogan.* Then take care of this young gentleman for a little bit, Sheila. Walk on, Mr. O'Callaghan.

[*O'Callaghan and Grogan go into room.*

*Sheila* (*to MacSweeney*). So you and my uncle made it up again?

*MacSweeney*. He asked me here, Miss O'Dwyer, to witness his mother's will. I couldn't very well refuse a neighbour.

*Sheila*. Oh, no; and people say you know a lot about money matters, too. You are much cleverer than I thought.

*MacSweeney* (*insinuatingly*). You know, I count myself a very lucky fellow to make friends with you so early, Miss O'Dwyer.

*Sheila*. I don't know what you mean.

*MacSweeney*. Isn't Mrs. Grogan's leaving you a pot of money?

*Sheila*. And how will that be any good to you, Mr. MacSweeney? Do you want to borrow some?

*MacSweeney* (*pulling up his collar*). Oh, I say! Miss O'Dwyer, you know what I mean. It's entirely too shy you are. Upon my word it is.

*Sheila*. Wanting to marry me, you'll be, maybe?

*MacSweeney*. Faith, it's more than wanting! I'll be doing it, Sheila. For you're the smartest little bundle I've met anywhere on all my travels.

*Sheila*. And if no money comes my way,—will that affect the bundle?

*MacSweeney*. Not one ounce, Sheila, darling. *With* money or without it, you're the girl for me.

[*He comes closer to Sheila. Grogan returns.*

*Grogan*. I'm not wanted there, and it looks as if I'm in the way here, too.

*MacSweeney.* No, no. This is your own house, Mr. Grogan.

*Grogan.* Indeed, I have just been told it's not. My mother may this very moment be leaving it to Sheila, for all I know. But you young fellows like to be talking to the girls when you get a chance, no matter whose house you're in. (*MacSweeney shakes his head.*) Oh, I know all about it, though I never was a young fellow myself. My nose was kept too close to the grinding-stone for that. Your father, Dan, let you have more of your own way.—It's a great day for the hay, glory be to God! You couldn't lend a hand to get it up, could you?

*MacSweeney.* I'll send you a couple of men when I get home— O'Callaghan won't be very long engaged?

[*Sheila puts away the breakfast things and arranges the kitchen. During the following speech, Grogan grows excited as he proceeds.*

*Grogan.* Oh, no! It can't take him long, there's so very, very little to leave anyone. "Lawyer O'Callaghan" we must call him now between ourselves. Sheila had everything—pen, ink and paper—ready waiting on the table. I hope the granny won't forget her for it. Indeed, I hope and trust she will not. (*He rushes about.*) It makes a body nervous Dan. Ay, it makes a body nervous... Sheila, will you see about them sucking-pigs? (*Sheila goes out.*) You wouldn't be wanting the makings of a good

brood-pig at your place, Dan? I'll sell you one cheap, or my mother will as soon as she gets finished in the bedroom. [Moves about nervously.]

*MacSweeney.* Sit down, Mr. Grogan, and be calm.

*Grogan.* Oh, it's easy to talk. You are not on trial for your life. Your future isn't hanging by a drop of ink at the top of an old pen in the next room, this moment!

*MacSweeney.* You have no reason to doubt the result, Mr. Grogan.

*Grogan.* Nobody can be certain of a woman, Dan. She may leave Sheila a couple of hundred. That would be a big pull out of the place. Or a hundred, or even fifty... Oh, God bless my soul!—where would it come from at all, at all?

*MacSweeney.* Why, your mother has thousands. What would a trifle like that be out of them?

*Grogan.* You don't know—you never had anything yourself—how very very little spoils the look of a good bank-book.

*MacSweeney.* But you said just now that you wished Sheila to have something. Her mother, I often heard, never got a penny when she married. It would balance things nicely if Sheila was left your sister's share now, and a bit over and beyond for interest.

*Grogan.* Dan MacSweeney, you know a lot about other people's business! To be sure Sheila will be left something. Her grandmother's clothes, and, maybe a pair of blankets. (*MacSweeney makes a motion*

*of disgust.)* It will be all put down in black and white before you go in there, so I don't mind telling you I wouldn't grudge Sheila her grandmother's old clothes ; and I could add something later on myself.  
—Oh, Lord ! here he comes !

[*O'Callaghan puts his head through room door.*

*O'Callaghan.* We want you, Dan, and Sheila O'Dwyer to witness the will. It is a very short one.

*Grogan.* Why do you want Sheila, in the name of Heaven ? [*MacSweeney calls Sheila.*

*O'Callaghan.* Because, Shan, her grandmother wishes it.

[*Sheila comes in, and is hurried across stage into room with O'Callaghan and MacSweeney.*

*Grogan (alone).* It gave me quite a start to hear them asking for that Sheila O'Dwyer. But it is all right ! It is all right ! She couldn't be a witness if she was left a single shilling. It's all right ! It's all right ! (*Dances to a chair; then starts up and listens.*) How hard it must go against the old woman to be leaving everything behind her ! I think I'll break out wild, myself, when she is gone, and spend it every penny ; it's so mortal hard to leave your property behind for anyone else to squander. (*O'Callaghan and MacSweeney come from room.*)

*O'Callaghan (holding up paper folded).* Mr. Grogan, the will is duly executed. It is to remain with me till wanted, which won't be long, I fear.

You should have had the priest and doctor first. The excitement has been too much for the poor old lady. She is now very low, indeed.

*Grogan (shakes O'Callaghan by hand, and speaks cheerfully).* Thank you, Mr. O'Callaghan, thank you kindly. I'll send for both these gentlemen at once. I thought it best to have all worldly matters settled before his reverence came near her.

*O'Callaghan.* Perhaps in this case it's just as well. Though I don't think anyone could influence your mother. She's a very strong-minded, determined old lady.

*Grogan.* I know that myself better than any other person. I wish I could offer you a glass of something. (*O'Callaghan shakes his head.*) No! Well you're a wise man. As soon as things get settled maybe we'll be able to do something for the building fund.

*O'Callaghan (smiling).* The building fund is going on splendidly.

*Grogan.* I'm more than glad to hear it.

[*Sheila comes in hastily.*

*Sheila.* Dan, Dan, run for the priest. Grandmother has fainted! Oh, uncle dear, I fear she's dying!

[*MacSweeney goes out. Grogan and O'Callaghan go into room.*

*Sheila (alone).* Her feet and hands are as cold as death. I must try hot water. (*Lifts up and shakes kettle.*) It can't be death! And yet she gave me

such a look it went right through my heart, as much as if she said she hadn't left me anything. (*Stirs the fire.*) [O'Callaghan comes from room.]

O'Callaghan. You need not trouble, Sheila. All is over !

[Grogan comes from room carrying a bunch of keys and holding up a large linen purse. He sits down and proceeds to open the purse.]

Sheila. Gone without a priest, a prayer, a word of holy comfort ! Gone before her Maker with her two arms clasped about the world !

Grogan. Wanting to take it with her if she could.

[Opens the purse and counts out money which he puts in his pocket.]

O'Callaghan. She went as near to taking with her all she owned of this world as anybody can. God rest her soul—the poor old woman !

[Sheila puts up her hands as if to pray.]

Grogan. Amen to that ! Amen ! And we must stop work for three whole days, and half the hay lying on the ground !

CURTAIN.

## ACT III.

THREE DAYS LATER.

SCENE: *The same.* A dish containing a few long clay pipes stands on the table. Sheila comes in. She takes off her hat and places it on the table. She is dressed in black. Grogan enters immediately after. He wears mourning bands on his hat and coat sleeves. His dress is light-coloured and oldish. He stands inside door, looking out. He carries a whip and a rug over his arm.

*Grogan (speaking loudly to some one outside).* Take care of that mare! Mind the pump! Give her a rub down and a wisp of hay to eat, and put the car into the shed. (*He comes forward.*) Oh dear! Three days without a hand's turn done, and the hay still lying on the ledge! Well, well, we had to bury her, I suppose. (*Sees Sheila.*) Sheila, is it sitting there idle you are?

*Sheila.* Yes, uncle. Why shouldn't I sit here?

*Grogan.* You know there's a lot of things to be done. I suppose you'll want some old woman to help you with the washing?

*Sheila (wearily).* I think that is the custom, uncle.

*Grogan.* Yes, and it's a custom, too, to give them whiskey ; but we'll encourage no bad habits in this house. Well, well (*speaking more cheerfully*), we must put up with our loss, Sheila. We must try to bear it manfully.

*Sheila.* Yes, uncle, her time was come, I suppose. Only I wish poor granny had a little longer notice of her end.

*Grogan.* Oh, I was thinking about the cost of the washing. Do you believe Finnigan's wife would do it for the old clothes? (*Hangs up whip.*) Ay, ay. Her hour was come, to be sure. But she had the blessed comfort, Sheila, of making her will. (*Hangs up hat.*) Just think how hard it would have been on her to die without that preparation !

*Sheila* (*demurely looking down*). I can't help thinking she was very unprepared.

*Grogan.* Hut, tut, Sheila. She settled everything, though it was a close shave (*puts rug on table, and takes a seat*). And a fine respectable funeral she had, even if there wasn't many walking people. We couldn't do without the hearse, I'm sorry to say.

*Sheila.* There wasn't people enough to carry her. It's quite plain the neighbours never liked her, and don't think much of you.

*Grogan.* It's a busy season, Sheila. But we had Father Andrew and the curate, too. I hope they won't be counting him extra. (*Sheila rises and puts away her hat and coat.*) There's a good girl ! Mike O'Callaghan's sure to be here in a few minutes

with the will. You must make a cup of tea for him. I suppose you hadn't time to read it when you went into the room that day?

*Sheila.* The will? No, uncle. I could see nothing, they were in such a hurry.

*Grogan.* No, of course, you couldn't. It is no matter. You weren't mentioned in it.

*Sheila.* How do you know that?

*Grogan.* Why, because you were a witness, Sheila. You could not be a witness if you were left a copper.

*Sheila.* But my mother's name may be in it, if not mine. I'd be quite satisfied if there was a trifle left to her.

*Grogan (starting up).* She could not do it on me! She would not do it on me! (*Sits down again.*) No, she'd never have the heart to place a burden round my neck for sake of the O'Dwyers.

*Sheila.* She never forgave my mother, I'm afraid. But she was growing softer every day. If she was only spared a little longer, I'd have brought her round completely.

*Grogan.* And you have the face to tell me that's what you were up to! You'll leave this house as soon as ever the washing is got through.

*Sheila.* If I knew how I stood, I'd leave the house without troubling about the washing, uncle.

*Grogan.* Maybe it's as well you should. You'd only be robbing me while you were here.

*Sheila.* Then, I'll not go unless you put me out. On second thoughts, I'll stay a week or two, for sake of appearances.

*Grogan.* Well, appearances are worth something, considering the big price people often pay for them. (*Grogan rises, and takes up one of the pipes from the table.*) Is there any more pipes left but these?

*Sheila.* No. I suppose I may give the few that's in it to the poor people who'll be calling?

*Grogan.* You'll do nothing of the kind! If the grocer won't take them back, I'll put them by in my own drawer for our next funeral.

[*He picks up rug and dish of pipes, and goes out with them. Sheila sits brooding. O'Callaghan comes in. He looks at Sheila.*

*O'Callaghan.* This will never do, Sheila. Cheer up, my girl. Young people may die, but the old ones must. Between ourselves, she wasn't over kind to you.

*Sheila.* That's why I'm so sorry, sir.

*O'Callaghan.* It's a queer reason, Sheila.

*Sheila.* It's a good reason. She would have grown kinder to me, and have done something better for me if I only had more time to handle her. But it's her poor, unprovided soul I'm thinking most about at present.

*O'Callaghan (mildly sarcastic).* So I see! But you can make your mind easy, good girl. Her last moments weren't idle. I never knew of anyone make so much provision in a little time—God rest her! (*Sits down beside Sheila.*) Sheila, you'll forgive

an old man, with daughters of his own, asking you a plain question. Is there any sort of engagement between you and Dan MacSweeney ?

*Sheila.* I know you ask me out of kindness, sir.

*O'Callaghan.* To be sure I do. You're a sort of orphan on our hands now, you know. Is there anything between you, Sheila ?

*Sheila.* Well, there is and there isn't, Mr. O'Callaghan.

*O'Callaghan.* A kind of half-and-half business ? (*Sheila nods.*) He thought you might suit the situation vacant in his heart if your grandmother left you a fortune ; and you mightn't if she didn't ? Isn't that it ?

*Sheila.* He said it was marriage between us, anyway.

*O'Callaghan.* Don't believe him, Sheila.

*Sheila.* Oh, Mr. O'Callaghan, I don't.

*O'Callaghan.* Come now, that's sensible. But tell me how you saw through the fellow's humbug.

*Sheila* (*demurely*). Well, Mr. O'Callaghan, I guessed it, because I wouldn't look the side of the road he walked if grandmother had left myself anything.

*O'Callaghan.* Ah ! I see you are a girl as able to look after number one as all the rest of your family.

*Sheila.* I have no one else to do it for me, Mr. O'Callaghan.

[*She sits down in a melancholy attitude in which she remains till Grogan, who comes in, dressed in his old coat, addresses her.*

*Grogan (effusively).* Ah, Mr. O'Callaghan, welcome as the flowers of May. (*Shakes hands with O'Callaghan, who rises.*) Sheila, hurry up the kettle there. Mr. O'Callaghan wants a cup o' tea. We all wants cups o' tea. (*Seeing Sheila wipe her eyes.*) Stop this nonsense! I'm the only one here left anything; and it stands to reason I am the only one has any right to cry. Just make the tea, like a good girl. (*To O'Callaghan.*) You must take a cup of tea, Michael, my friend. I'll not have "no" from you.

*O'Callaghan.* Well, as you are so pressing! If it's not stopping Sheila's tears too suddenly. (*They sit down.*) A great string of cars, Shan, to bring the old lady home! You see we respect the old stock after all—when they leave something decent after them.

*Grogan (putting his handkerchief to his eyes).* Mr. O'Callaghan, you put things very feelingly. It is a comfort to see how much she was respected, and to know she left no cause for anyone to feel unsatisfied. She settled everything as everybody wished she should.

*O'Callaghan (smiling).* It takes a wise person to do that, Shan.

*Grogan.* She ever and always was a rock of sense. God reward her for it! I knew she wouldn't leave me hampered.

*O'Callaghan.* Oh, she gave you perfect liberty in every possible way.

*Grogan (in a lower tone, pointing over his shoulder to Sheila, who is busy at the fire making tea).* Nothing left to any of them?

*O'Callaghan.* Not a penny!

*Grogan.* I knew she would not have it on her conscience. When I was only a weeney little cherub at her knee, she said she'd leave me everything. It's a comfort to know that she was faithful to the end.

*O'Callaghan.* But a daughter is a daughter, Shan ; and poor Mrs. O'Dwyer never had a penny out of this. Would it be too much to ask you now to show a little liberality to a poor sister with a helpless family?

*Grogan.* My mother was in her proper senses when she made her will. You can't deny that, Michael ?

*O'Callaghan.* I have no wish to deny it, Shan.

*Grogan.* Well, then, she knew, as a responsible soul about to face her Maker, what she was about. Do you, as a religious man, ask me to alter a solemn settlement like that ? I could not think of doing it.

*O'Callaghan.* Don't get angry, Mr. Grogan.

*Grogan.* I am more than angry. I am wounded in my tenderest feelings as a son to have it hinted I could upset such a mother's will.

*O'Callaghan.* Then I need not ask you to assist our building fund ?

*Grogan.* That is even worse. She never gave encouragement to extravagance in such ways at all. She'd turn in her grave to think I did it. You wouldn't have my mother turning in her grave, would you ?

[*Sheila brings forward two cups of tea.*  
*MacSweeney comes in. Sheila looks away from him.*

*MacSweeney.* Sheila won't you speak to me ?

[*Sheila does not answer. She returns to fire.*

*Grogan (annoyed).* Mr. MacSweeney, we are going to talk about private affairs.

*O'Callaghan.* He is one of the executors. We can't do without him.

*Grogan (surprised).* Him !

*O'Callaghan.* Ay, indeed. Hand me over that will, Dan (*to MacSweeney*).

[*MacSweeney hands paper to O'Callaghan, who unfolds it, looks at it, re-folds it, and takes up a cup of tea, which he slowly sips. MacSweeney sits down at opposite side of table, and takes up the other cup of tea.*

*Grogan (sarcastically).* Make yourselves at home, gentlemen. This is not my house. That is not my tea you are drinking. I have no authority here at all.

*O'Callaghan (with emphasis).* Shan Grogan, you've exactly hit it. (*Thumping table.*) But you may have a cup of tea at the cost of the parish ; for everything your mother had is left to Father Andrew.

[*Sheila drops a vessel near the fire, and advances in astonishment.*

*Grogan.* You are mad, O'Callaghan !

*O'Callaghan.* No, Grogan, no, I am thankful to say. [*Hands Grogan will, who eagerly looks at it.*

*Grogan.* She was out of her mind ! I'm quite certain she was out of her mind when she signed a thing like this.

*O'Callaghan.* You didn't think so a few minutes back.

*Grogan.* It's undue clerical influence has done it all.

*O'Callaghan.* Unfortunately, the poor old woman didn't see the priest or have any communication with him for a long time before she died.

*Grogan.* I'll fight it out in law. I'll break it up if there's a court of justice left in Ireland.

*O'Callaghan.* I expected you'd say that. But take a friend's advice and don't make an enemy of the priest. The property is left to him, as you see, to use at his discretion, partly for the benefit of poor persons who are not beggars, and partly to the building fund, just as he thinks proper.

*Grogan.* Oh, dear! oh, dear! What is to become of me?

*O'Callaghan.* Well, I have talked to the priest about it; and he thinks this gives him power to devote some portion of the money to your sister or even to her daughter, Sheila, who did so much to put the old lady in her better frame of mind towards the end.

*Grogan.* You all want to drive me mad.

*O'Callaghan.* Far from that, Shan. I want to put you in your proper senses. Keep well in with Father Andrew; and, who knows, he may leave you here as a kind of manager for him as long as you behave yourself.

*Grogan.* Michael, I always thought you were a just man. How could you draw up such a will as this?

*O'Callaghan.* I wrote it down exactly as your mother told me. She must have had it in her head a long time, it all came out of her so easy.

*Grogan.* Oh, it was a cruel, cruel piece of roguery!

*O'Callaghan.* She thought only of her own soul, Shan.

*Grogan.* And to save her soul didn't scruple how she beggared me! It was a downright selfish sort of piety.

*O'Callaghan.* I can't exactly contradict you, Shan. But she had the power to do it. God forgive her if she wronged you!

*Grogan.* God may forgive the wrong she's done me. But how can I forgive the wrong she has done poor Sheila and my sister?

*O'Callaghan.* It's wonderful how tender people sometimes get when hardness doesn't pay.

[*Sheila goes close to Grogan.*

*Sheila.* Uncle, we haven't been the warmest of friends, but after what you said now I'm sorry they have cheated you. [*Grogan pushes her away.*

*Grogan.* It was your coming did it all.

*Sheila.* My coming hasn't been a great success to myself.

*MacSweeney.* You were doing your duty, Miss O'Dwyer. That must be a comfort in your disappointment.

*Sheila (severely).* Mr. MacSweeney, your sympathy is cheap. But let me tell you it will never pay your debts; and, for my part, I don't want it!

*MacSweeney.* Don't be angry with me. I wish with all my heart you were left the fortune you expected.

*Sheila.* That you might honour me by offering to share it? Dan MacSweeney, you need not flatter yourself. If I had a fortune, I wouldn't look at you. My uncle has his faults, but, compared with the man who wants to marry money, my uncle is a king.

*Grogan (aside to Sheila).* It was a lucky thing I made a little stocking for myself, and put a bit aside, my mother never knew about. When my time comes, it won't go to the parish, Sheila. [*Sheila caresses him.*

*O'Callaghan.* You see, Dan, blood's thicker than water after all.

*Grogan.* Well, whatever mother did, she took nothing from any but her own, and that she had a right to do. Sheila, let us walk down and place our hard case in Father Andrew's hands. He is the guardian of the orphan and the poor.

*O'Callaghan.* It's a very wise step you're both taking.

*Grogan.* Ah, my friends! whatever some may think, I feel that I have been too long a stranger to my pastor's holy influence.

[*Goes with Sheila to the door.*

*O'Callaghan (to MacSweeney).* Dan, when Grogan lights his holy candle, we may blow out ours.

*Grogan.* No, Michael; you must hold your candles up to me.

CURTAIN.

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